

ADVERTISEMENT,

Necessary to be Observed in the

NAVIGATION

Up and Down the

K. English Channel.

CHANNEL of ENGLAND.

Communicated by a Fellow of the ROYAL SOCIETY.

FOR several Years last past it has been Observed, that many Ships bound up the Channel, have by mistake fallen to the Northward of *Scilly*, and run up the *Bristol Channel* or *Severn Sea*, not without great Danger, and the Loss of many of them. The Reason of it is, without dispute, from the Change of the Variation of the Compass, and the Latitude of the *Lizard* and *Scilly*, laid down too far Northerly by near 5 Leagues. For from undoubted Observation the *Lizard* lies in $49^{\circ} 55'$, the middle of *Scilly* due West therefrom, and the South part thereof nearest $49^{\circ} 50'$. whereas in most Charts and Books of Navigation they are laid down to the Northward of 50° : and in some full $50^{\circ} 10'$. Nor was this without a good Effect as long as the Variation continued Easterly, as it was when the Charts were made. But since it is become considerably Westerly, (as it has been since the Year 1657.) and is at present about $7\frac{1}{2}$ Degrees; all Ships standing in, out of the Ocean, East by N, go two Thirds of a Point to the Northward of their true Course; and in every eighty Miles they Sail, Latitude about 10 Minutes; so that if they miss an Observation for two or three Days, and do not allow Variation, they fail not to fall to the Northward of their Expectation, especially if they reckon *Scilly* 10 Degrees. This has been by some attributed to the Indraught of *St. George's Channel*, the Tide of which is supposed to set more to the Northward, than is compensated by the Ebb setting out. But the Variation allowed, it hath been found that the said Indraught is not sensible, and that Ships steering two Watches for one East, do exactly keep their Parallel. This practice is therefore recommended to all Masters of Ships, who are unacquainted with the Allowances to be made for the Variation; as also that they come in, out of the Channel, on a Parallel not more Northerly than $49^{\circ} 40'$, which will bring them fair by the *Lizard*.

Nor is this the only Danger to which Ships are exposed in the Channel, on account of this Change of the Variation; for this last Winter has given us more than one Instance of Shipwreck upon the *French Coast* and the *Casketts*, of Ships newly departed from the *Donns*. And though perhaps this were not the only Cause of those Losses, yet it cannot be doubted but it concurred thereto: For by the late curious Survey of the Coast of *France*, compared with what has been done for our own (though perhaps not altogether so exactly) it appears that the true Course from the Land of *Beachy* or *Dungyness* to the *Casket-Rocks*, is but West 26 Degrees Southerly; which in former Times, when the Variation was as much Easterly, as now 'tis Westerly, was about *SW b W* by Compass, and then a *WSW* Course, then called *Channel-Course*, was very proper for all Ships bound into the Ocean: But at present, who so steers a *WSW* Course in the Channel, though never so near to the Shore of *Beachy*, will not fail to fall in with the *Casketts*, or rather to the Eastwards thereof: It follows therefore, That as the Compass now Varies, the West by South Course be accounted the *Channel-Course*, instead of *WSW*; which Course, from a reasonable Offing from *Beachy-head*, will carry a Ship fair without the *Isle of Wight*, and about mid-way between *Portland-Bill* and the *Casket-Rocks*; which are scarce 14 Leagues asunder, and nearly in a Meridian. If this Notice be thought needless by those, whose Knowledge and Experience makes them want no Assistance; yet if it may contribute to the saving any one Ship, the Author thereof is more than recompenced for the little pains he has taken to communicate it.